



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**For Immediate Release**

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**TWO SENTENCED IN IDENTITY FRAUD CASE**

Tampa, Florida - U.S. District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich sentenced two defendants in District Court this week. Today, Lawrence S. Smith, 46, of Orlando, Florida was sentenced to twenty-five years' imprisonment, five years of supervised release, and was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$1,705,611.51. Yesterday, Christopher Alpert, 22, of Nashville, Tennessee, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, three years of supervised release, and was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$209,647.74.

On June 11, 2003 Christopher Alpert pled guilty to conspiracy to commit identity theft, credit card fraud, bank fraud, and mail fraud. On August 7, 2003, Lawrence Smith pled guilty to the conspiracy charge as well as engaging in illegal monetary transactions, money laundering, mail fraud and possession of unauthorized access devices.

According to court documents, the defendants, through use of the United States District Court PACER system and other means, acquired biographical and credit information relating to other individuals, who were financially well-to-do, and who had been convicted of criminal offenses and were incarcerated in prisons. The defendants identified existing credit card and other bank accounts established in those victims' names, and they misappropriated (continued to use) those accounts. They also fraudulently established new banking accounts in the victims' names. The defendants obtained money and other property by fraudulently negotiating credit card convenience checks, obtaining cash advances against credit and line of credit accounts, and by engaging in genuine and fraudulent point of sale transactions. The fraudulent activity involved in this conspiracy victimized at least thirty-five individuals, over twenty-four financial institutions, and generated losses in excess of \$1,700,000. Smith and Alpert are the last of seven defendants to be sentenced in this case.

This case was investigated by the United States Secret Service, Orlando Field Office, and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert T. Monk.